



Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 8th April 2019 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor M. Longhi (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor P. Bott (Deputy Mayor)

“ B. Allen
“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.J. Barker
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ R. Burley
“ O. Butler
“ K. Chambers
“ B. Chattha
“ A.G. Clarke
“ S.J. Cooper
“ D. Coughlan
“ S.R. Craddock
“ C.U. Creaney
“ S.K. Ditta
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ K. Ferguson
“ M. Follows
“ J. Fitzpatrick
“ S.F. Fitzpatrick
“ N.Z. Gultasib
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ A.J. Hicken
“ K. Hussain
“ L.D. Jeavons

Councillor C. Jones

“ T.J. Jukes
“ Mrs. R.A. Martin
“ J. Murray
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ M. Nazir
“ A.S. Nazir
“ S.L. Neville
“ G. Perry
“ L.J. Rattigan
“ W. Rasab
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ E.B. Russell
“ S. Samra
“ K. Sears
“ I. Shires
“ G. Singh Sohal
“ M.A. Statham
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ A. Underhill
“ S. Wade
“ M. Ward
“ V.J. Waters
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall
“ A. Young

97. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors S. Coughlan, A Ditta, James, Kudhail and Sarohi.

98. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2019 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the name of Councillor Creaney being substituted for Councillor P. Bott as submitting the petition relating to land at Stringes Lane.

99. **Declarations of interest**

The following members declared an interest in the items indicated:

Councillor Allen	Item 12 – Notice of motion – Healthy borough
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Councillors Burley, Chambers, Jeavons, Robertson and Underhill	Item 14 – Notice of motion – Modern slavery
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100. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

102. **Mayor's announcements**

(1) **Retiring members**

The Mayor thanked Councillors Chambers, A. Ditta, Kudhail, Rochelle and Russell who were not standing for re-election on 2nd May 2019 for their services to the Council and the people of Walsall and wished them well for the future.

(2) **Director of Public Health**

The Mayor informed the Council that this was the last Council meeting before Dr. Barbara Watt the Director of Public Health left the authority. On behalf of the Council he thanked her for her contribution to the Council and wished her well for the future.

103. **Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted.

104. **Questions**

From the public – Youth provision in Darlaston

In the absence of the questioner, Benjamin Williams, the Mayor asked the following question on his behalf:

“Would the Portfolio please tell us how Walsall Council will provide and develop a safe, inclusive and sustainable Youth Provision in Darlaston, with the young people from Darlaston?”

Councillor Wilson replied:

“Thank you for the question. Creating a sustainable network of youth provision is a collective role and responsibility, not purely one for the local authority alone.

It is all about “capacity through partnerships” and offers far more opportunities around funding, skills, sharing of resources and knowledge as well as potential for innovation.

Walsall Council’s dedicated youth provision provides 4 full time and 10 part time “targeted youth workers” who support identified vulnerable young people across the borough. They respond to identified anti-social behaviour hotspots and deliver programmes to individual young people or groups as part of community resolutions or ABC’s.

We have a dedicated young people’s centre and community centre at Walstead Road, called My Place, which offers a wide range of services to help young people make a successful start in their adult and working lives.

In relation to working with young people in Darlaston

The Early Help locality within the north and west are developing a “localised youth forum” where young people will have the opportunity of feeding into the dedicated Youth of Walsall project to ensure their voices are heard, take part in local projects, have their say on local issues that are concerning them, enabling the Youth of Walsall to represent young people locally, regionally and nationally.

Current consultation is underway within schools and local groups prior to the first forum being held, it is the intention to hold the first forum over the summer period.

In relation to future youth provision across the borough, I can confirm that following the local elections in May the Conservative administration have pledged to review the lack of youth provision across the borough in the light of the perceived increase in anti-social behaviour which some people attribute to the lack of youth provision.”

The Mayor confirmed that a copy of Councillor Wilson’s response would be sent to Mr. Benjamin Williams.

(b) **Members of the Council**

No questions had been submitted from members of the Council.

105. **Private rented sector and selective licensing**

The report of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Shires and seconded by Councillor Jeavons:

That Council note the findings from the Private Rented Sector Housing and Selective Licensing Working Group and refer the recommendations to Cabinet to consider their implementation.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried – 27 members voting in favour, 26 against and 1 abstention and it was:

Resolved

That Council note the findings from the Private Rented Sector Housing and Selective Licensing Working Group and refer the recommendations to Cabinet to consider their implementation.

106. **West Midlands Combined Authority and Walsall MBC**

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out the progress of the current West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) work and reviewed the achievements to date alongside future plans.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

107. **Portfolio holder briefing – Education and skills**

A report was submitted.

Councillor Towe portfolio holder for education and skills gave a presentation.

Members asked questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to by Councillor Towe.

108. **Notice of motion – Healthy borough**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Jeavons, seconded by Councillor Robertson and:

Resolved

Walsall Council is working to become a Healthy Borough. Our ambition is to reduce health inequalities so that all residents can live a longer and healthier life.

Council notes:

That the local authority is using its powers and resources to promote physical and mental health and that it is recognised nationally and by WHO (European Healthy Cities Network) as developing a “health in all policies” approach to embed actions across policies and services. This approach includes:

- Healthy transport and air quality
- Leisure services and physical activity
- Housing and planning
- Health improvement in community settings such as action on smoking reduction, healthy weight and promoting mental wellbeing
- A working city and health at work
- Working with partners to develop a Good Food Plan
- A vibrant healthy schools programme
- Working with partners through the Wellbeing for Life Board

Council also notes:

That the challenges are great. Government policies are conspiring against making our Borough healthier. In particular Council regrets:

- The impact of austerity through public sector pay reductions, cuts to local government funding and cuts in “welfare reform” and housing benefits. Child poverty in the Borough is growing and this will have lifelong health and wellbeing consequences;
- Cuts to services across the NHS which will seriously impact on the health and wellbeing of Walsall residents now and in the future and which may no longer be accessible at the point of need. These will severely restrict the direction of travel as set out in the NHS five year forward view of strengthening community-based services and focusing on prevention at a time NHS spending is falling as a proportion of GDP and is projected to fall further by 2020, well below the European average;

- That children and young people are having to wait longer to access mental health support, if they manage to get a referral at all, and the numbers having to attend A and E with a psychiatric condition are increasing;
- The reductions in the funding for community pharmacies which will lead to closures, reduction in services and lack of capacity to develop innovative approaches in support for our vision for public health;
- Closure of GP practices in areas of high deprivation;
- Reduction in CCG spending on mental health at a time when demand is increasing;
- A £413m funding gap in NHS services by 2021 in the region which is driving the Black Country Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP);
- The lack of transparency, inclusivity and local accountability of the government driven STP.

Council resolves to:

- Endorse the Council's approach to develop a Healthy borough;
- Note the scale of the challenge to reduce health inequalities in the face of the Government's continuing austerity agenda which impacts on our public services;
- Restate our opposition to Government policies on the funding and future governance of NHS services;
- Call on the Government to invest in the NHS to the same level as in European countries;
- Call for a more transparent and inclusive approach to the development and implementation of STPs by ensuring all stakeholders are fully involved at both regional and local level;
- To continue adhering to the Marmot objectives in order to address health inequalities in our town.

109. **Notice of motion – Health charter and mental health charter**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Robertson, seconded by Councillor Nawaz and:

Resolved

This Council accepts that there is a need to agree a health charter and mental health charter to be agreed by our partners – Walsall Mental Health Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

These charters will ensure that all partners agree a set of aspirations to move forward together.

110. **Notice of motion – Modern slavery**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Ward, seconded by Councillor D. Coughlan and:

Resolved

Council notes that the Co-operative Party's Charter against modern slavery proposes that:

“[Each Council] shall:

- Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
- Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
- Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
- Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
- Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
- Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
- Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
- Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
- Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
- Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.”

This Council notes that:

- Even though slavery was abolished by the British Parliament in 1833, there are more slaves today than ever before in human history. Figures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggest that there are more than 40 million people in modern slavery across the world, with nearly 25 million held in forced labour.
- There were 3805 victims of modern slavery identified in the UK in 2016. A rising number still well below the 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims estimated by the Home Office.
- Modern slavery is happening nationwide as well as across the world. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. This can include sexual and criminal exploitation. This Council further notes:

- The work undertaken with a range of partners, including Safer Walsall Partnership, West Midlands Police and others to identify, refer and support the victims of modern slavery.
- Our partnership work has been highlighted by the legal director of Hope for Justice who praised the "...dedicated partnership working on this issue, which has produced such fantastic results ... Multidisciplinary, multi-agency responses are the only way we will be able to eliminate this crime and to ensure best outcomes for victims."
- Other partner agencies have also praised the hard work, commitment and ability to work in partnership with Walsall Council to protect vulnerable people and fight against the exploitation of others in the UK.

This Council believes:

- That action needs to be taken to raise awareness of modern slavery and the fact that it is happening all over the UK.
- That local businesses should be encouraged to follow our lead in looking at how procurement practices can be used as a tool to help prevent modern slavery.
- That the current support for victims is not sufficient and needs to go beyond the 45 days they are currently given by the government so that an additional period of 12 months support is given.
- That Councils have an important role to play in ensuring their contracts and supplies don't contribute to modern day slavery and exploitation.

This Council resolves to:

- Ensure it is doing all it can to tackle modern day slavery in line with the LGA's guidance.
- Write to government to ask that support for victims is extended beyond the current 45 days.
- Adopt and apply the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery (as far as is legally possible) to ensure that our procurement practices don't support slavery.

At this point in the meeting, the Council sat as charitable trustees. When considering the following item Council procedure rules did not apply.

Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee – annual report

The annual report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Andrew, seconded by Councillor Bird and:

Resolved

That the work of the Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee be noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.45 p.m.